INNER PARTY DISCUSSION ISSUE

SOCIALIST APPEAL

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The Road Ahead

A Draft Platform for the Socialist Party

NOTE: The following document is presented by a group of comrades active in the left wing of the party throughout the country. The document is not a theoretical program and does not presume to deal with all the questions confronting the party in an exhaustive manner. In a general way it analyzes the weaknesses of the party, especially as shown during the recent election campaign and indicates the path which the party should take in the immediate future. All party members and members of the Y.P.S.L. are invited to comment and criticize.

From now until the party convention in March the APPEAL will publish resolutions and articles on all questions of interest to the party membership, especially on those questions which will be taken up at the convention. The APPEAL as is well known takes a definite left wing position on all questions but its pages are open to comrades who do not agree with the position of the APPEAL.

I

ALL WHO seriously consider the problems of the party will realize that a new stage of its development now lies ahead. This new stage is one step further along the path which the party first entered at Detroit, in 1934. The adoption of the Declaration of Principles at Detroit, and the subsequent victory of the Declaration in the party referendum, symbolizes the first great stage of the advance toward revolutionary Marxism. The bulk of the party membership showed thereby its determination to learn from the tragic lessons of European history, above all from the events in Germany, and to break away from the whole tradition of social-democratic reformism which had played so disastrous and fatal a part in making possible the triumph of Hitler.

Since, in this country, that tradition of social-democratic reformism was embodied in its most bitter and reactionary form in the Right Wing of the Socialist party, above all in the New York Old Guard, the advance of the party membership necessarily involved a mortal organizational conflict between the leftward moving membership and the Right Wing. This conflict gathered cumulative force during the succeeding two years, and reached a second climax at the Cleveland convention in May of this year. At Cleveland, a new decisive step was taken; the party cast from its back the dragging weight of the New York Old Guard, and marked thereby its continuing resolve to go forward.

The process was by no means completed, however, by the actions at Cleveland. The months since May enable us to estimate more accurately, in the light of concrete experience, the exact meanings and implications of those actions, and to draw adequate conclusions for the stages which lie still ahead. In politics as in chemistry, it is impossible to mix oil and water. In rapid succession, the political bedfellows of the New York Old Guard, in the Jewish and Finnish Federations, in Washington, Massachusetts, Maryland, California, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, were compelled to break away and join their proper companions—join them with full consequences of their political direction so glaringly revealed in the present year by open support of a capitalistic presidential candidate.

Meanwhile the party itself hesitated, not yet ready to draw the **positive** conclusions of which the split with the Right Wing was the negative counterpart. Time was wasted and forces lost in the vain attempt to conciliate what remained of the Right Wing instead of conducting a sharp and envigorating struggle against it. While courageously facing the central issue of the campaign by posing the alternative of socialism vs. capitalism, and fighting against shattering odds for the maintenance of the political independence of the labor movement, the party nevertheless failed to place its campaign on a clear revolutionary basis. It retained far too gross an amount of that "parliamentarism" which disclosed the remnants of Old Guardism still exercising their influence, thus contradicting the abstract statement of the central issue of the campaign by a continuance of reformist demands and propaganda in practice. It fell conspicuously short in utilizing politically the world-shaking events of the summer months—in particular the Spanish events and the Soviet Trial. Its press was too often silent where it should have given uncompromising lead to the party membership and the advanced workers generally. It still attempted to woo favor from the trade union bureaucrats, until one after another, from Dubinsky to Hochman to Rieve these deserted to the bandwagon of the class enemy. It was unwilling to combat sternly the deadly influence of its opponent parties in the working class, especially the Communist party, allowing its vicious attacks and treacherous ideas to go virtually unansweerd and even to make certain inroads into its own ranks. In spite of and in the face of the War Resolution adopted at Cleveland, influential members of the party continued support of pacifist organizations and ideas in this country and abroad, thus lending Socialist prestige to these agencies which,

at best, only confuse the workers and paralyze the revolutionary struggle against the coming war.

The election campaign is now over. The time has come to make up the balance sheet, to draw conclusions, and again to go resolutely forward.

II.

The alternative which faces the party is of crystal clarity. No rationalization, no wishful thinking, no high sounding phrases, can dodge it. The party must become, in the full sense, in word and act, the conscious, fighting, revolutionary party of the American working class; it must become this, or it must perish. This alternative is posed by all the circumstances of American historical development in their concrete actuality at the present time. It is no longer possible—to paraphrase Lincoln's epigram—for the party to continue half-revolutionary and half-reformist. Any attempt still to hesitate, to delay decision, means continuing and increasing disintegration.

There is, to put the matter in its simplest terms, no room in this country for any socialist party other than a revolutionary party. The other roads are already monopolized. The two great varieties of revisionism—social-democratic reformism and Stalinism—have already their authentic representatives, and there is no field for competition. If the Socialist party fails during the approaching months to give an uncompromising revolutionary lead, it will follow that its membership will drop day by day, now into the camp of the Social-Democratic Federation, now into the Stalinist arms; with the revolutionary workers among its membership gradually losing heart and in growing numbers abandoning the movement altogether.

If, on the other hand, the Socialist party moves with determination along the revolutionary path, its future is as assured as it is magnificent. All the problems of our age, all the demands of history itself, all the promises of the future call to this supreme task—the forging of the revolutionary vanguard—and guarantee its triumphant fulfilment. And it is to this task that the minds and energies of every left wing Socialist must be dedicated.

This task, however, cannot be completed overnight nor by any organizational sleight-of-hand. It must be achieved step by step. Its accomplishment will be symbolized above all in the adoption by the party as a whole of a full revolutionary program, answering in the mighty accents of Marxism every great problem, national and international, of our age. This program will complete the utter break from every trace of reformism, will abandon each vestige of legalism and parliamentarianism, will separate the ideology of the party from any dependence upon the illusions of the classless nature of the state. It will proclaim the historical necessity of the workers' dictatorship as the only means for the conquest of power, as the only guarantor for genuine workers' democracy and the only weapon for the attainment of socialism. It will cut loose from any holdover of pacifism or social-patriotism. It will focus its position around the axis of unyielding class struggle for workers' power. It will burn in every line with the fire of Marxist internationalism, and will lead the party out to union with its true allies in every country, with the revolutionary internationalists of the world proletariat. To educate and struggle for such a program is the imperative and constant duty of every revolutionary Socialist.

III

To achieve such a program, however, and a party truly embodying such a program, is not by any means a merely "educational" enterprise. It must be the culmination of the real development of the active life of the party, built in militant action, and born naturally from the clash and resolution of conflicting ideas and forces.

No illusion could be more dangerous than to imagine that the goal can be won by the simple device of "centralization" or "tightening up the apparatus." The slogan of "centralization," put forward as a cure-all for party difficulties by a number of comrades has become increasingly talked of in recent weeks. This slogan constitutes a half-truth all the more dangerous for the element of actual truth it does in fact contain.

By all means our party must be centralized and disciplined. The firmest discipline in action combined with the fullest democratic freedom in internal discussion is the sole organizational form which can provide an adequate structure for an effective revolutionary party. But centralization cannot be arbitrarily **imposed** by a vote or a wish. Centralization is the **outgrowth from,** not the presupposition of, political clarification and agreement. We must always examine **first** the political content of centralization, not its abstract mechanics. We must ask ourselves, centralization for what? in what direction? in the interests of what ideas or what currents? And these questions are prior to the bare fact of centralization itself. A premature decision for centralization could only be an attempt to delay revolutionary growth, and far from invigorating the party even "practically," could only condemn it to sterility. We must have an **active** party, a party of militant, cohesive disciplined action; but, paradoxically as this may seem we cannot have an active party merely by "being active." Activity becomes dissipated and cancels out unless we **understand** the activity, its goal and purpose and direction. Such understanding is reached by the freest possible discussion of all views and tendencies within the party. In the development of the revolutionary party, disciplined activity and free discussion are not opposed to each other but in every way supplement each other. Discussion enables us to understand, draw conclusions from, and direct our activities; actions test, apply and extend the influence of the ideas formulated in discussion. The extremes of "SLPism"—"debating club politics"—on the one side and of mere gross pragmatic "activism" on the other are equally opposed to the genuine revolutionary party, in which theory and deed, unified vigorous action and free critical discussion are indissolubly fused.

While conflicting ideas and tendencies still remain on a large scale within the party, an attempt at rigid centralization could lead to only two possible results. It would most probably be merely meaningless, unable to be put in effect against the pressure of the internal conflicts. Or it would be an effort on the part of those undertaking "centralization" to enforce in a purely bureaucratic manner **their** ideas and tendency against other forces in the party. Such an effort could not, however, succeed. It could by the more normal processes of ideological clarification and the test of action. Centralization must, then, be achieved in the process of and as the concomitant of the revolutionizing of the party in action.

IV

During the next months, the party faces crucial tests and decisive problems. The problems lie within every field of party activity. Not all of these can be covered by a single document. In order to indicate the direction the party must take to move toward the goal of becoming in full actuality the revolutionary vanguard of the American workers, what is needed is to outline the necessary perspective as applied to the key issues now facing us.

1. **Trade Union and Unemployment Work.** The party can become the revolutionary leader of the workers, can go beyond mere propaganda and parliamentary and educational existence, can avoid the sterility of SLPism and legalism and sectarianism, only by rooting itself in the masses. The party must rid itself altogether of the conception that "political action" means simply carrying on a parliamentary campaign every four years, and going to sleep in between with sporadic "educational" work occasionally interrupting. Revolutionary political action means above all, in the concrete, active work in the trade unions and the other economic organizations of the working class, and extending socialist influence within them. The party can neither stand aside from nor merely follow the trade unions. It is the job of the party to **lead,** not to avoid or trail the working class. And the trade unions constitute the disciplined infantry of the main army of the revolution, just as the revolutionary party constitutes its vanguard.

A beginning has been made. In the field of the organization of the unemployed, in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, in the California Agricultural and Maritime Unions, in various unions and farmers' organizations in the Northwest, the rubber workers, the teachers and garment and leather workers the party has moved in the necessary direction. These activities have been the brightest developments of the past year. But it should be realized that they constitute no more than a beginning. The entire party must be oriented toward trade union work as the most decisive and extensive form of party activity.

Every single eligible party member must belong to his proper trade union or unemployed alliance. Within the unions, party members must work within disciplined socialist leagues, in accord with an independent socialist policy, for militant, fighting, class-struggle trade-union principles.

We must root out of the Socialist trade union policy the remnants of dependence on the reactionary trade union bureaucracy. We must understand that this bureaucracy is in actuality an agency of the bourgeoisie within the working class dedicated above all to the maintenance of capitalism and the suppression of the revolutionary development of the labor movement. The last six months have provided adequate lessons in this sphere. The trade union officials on whom the party leaned, and behind whose policy the party often trailed—Dubinsky, Hochman, Rieve, all of them threw over and betrayed the party in the moment of crisis: all of them ended in the camp of Roosevelt.

Socailists in C. I. O.

The next months especially dictate the necessity for the rapid increase of determined socialist activity in the unions. A great wave of strikes, already presaged by the maritime strike, is highly probable, and these strikes will provide the opportunity and the great need for Socialist participation; and will likewise enable us to test and develop our own forces.

In the split in the labor movement which is being forced by the craft union bureaucracy the CIO undoubtedly represents the more progressive force and must be supported in its struggle for the organization of the mass production industries on an industrial union basis. But a further development of the progressive implications of the CIO movement can be brought about only through the conscious intervention of the Socialists and the independent functioning of a genuinely progressive formation within the unions under socialist influence. Progressive movements can arise spontaneously in the trade unions, or under inadequate and unreliable leadership at the start, as in the present situation, but a consistent development of such movements is possible only if Socialists and militants assert themselves as an independent force and exert a steadily increasing influence.

In any case it must be remembered that the officials of the CIO cannot at all be relied upon to provide correct leadership for the progressive forces in the trade unions. An accident of history brought it about that Lewis and his associates have appeared temporarily as nominal representatives of these progressive forces by advocating what are under present circumstances progressive policies. But this accident is not at all permanent. Socialists naturally support industrial unionism and organization of the mass production industries, but Lewis cannot be relied on even to carry through his own avowed plans, much less to continue in a progressive direction. His whole past career, the way in which he runs his own union, his social philosophy and his political role, the character of current negotiations and the handling of the steel drive, all prove this clearly enough. The real progressive wing of the trade unions will have to be built under **independent** revolutionary Socialist leadership, or it will not be built at all. The fact that the Communist party in the unions has altogether abandoned any fight against class-collaborationism—which, as always, is the key question in trade union policy—is an additional demonstration of the necessity for Socialist leadership of the progressive forces; and, furthermore, leaves the road free and open for the assumption of that leadership. The Communist party in the unions, neglecting the fight for economic demands and the resultant sharpening of the class struggle, more and more uses its influence in the unions merely to serve its People's Front perspective, to slide into favor in reformist political movements, and to supply delegates to its swarm of "Leagues" and "Congresses."

Socialist Discipline in Unions

The work in the unions is also one of the first and immediate ways in which discipline and centralization of Socialist activity can be introduced. Conflicts of ideas and tendencies within the party must not be allowed to interfere with firm discipline and unity of action on the part of the trade union leagues. Without iron-clad discipline, effective work in the unions is unthinkable. Such discipline, toward which only first steps have been made, must and can be introduced **at once;** and must apply equally to every Socialist in the unions, from the rank-and-file member to the highest union official. Disciplined union activity in its turn offers both a testing ground for conflicting ideas and a preparation for the more complete centralization of party activity as a whole.

* * *

2. **The Press.** While keeping in mind the need for a centralized party-owned and party-controlled press, the immediate concern of the party must be—**a revolutionary press.** It is with respect to the press above all that the past months have revealed the most glaring weaknesses. Our press in no sense meets the needs either of the party membership itself or of the advanced workers generally. The desertion of the established party papers—the NEW LEADER and the FORWARD—from the party and to the camp of the New Deal created a gap in the regular party press not quickly filled. We find a semi-Stalinist paper associated with the name of the party in Oklahoma, a semi-New Deal paper in Wisconsin. The failure of the press as a whole, including conspicuously the official campaign organ, the SOCIALIST CALL, is especially to be discovered in: (a) the lack of sharp analyses from a revolutionary point of view of great political events national and international, as they occur; (b) the lack of adequate treatment of trade union

developments and activities; (c) the absence of clear directives to the party membership; (d) the lack of replies to the attacks of our enemies.

In short, our press must mave a **position, a line,** and a **revolutionary position.** There must be no ambiguity or indecision about how it stands. It is the shocking but nevertheless true fact that not **yet** has the party press—with the exception of the organ of the YPSL—made clear its attitude toward the events in Spain, the revolutionary crises in France, the Soviet Trial, the People's Front moves of the Communist party in this country, and any of a dozen other of the great issues that have arisen during the past six months. Our press has avoided questions instead of answering them, to "play safe" instead of leading, to do its best "not to antagonize" its enemies instead of meeting and conquering them. It has contented itself with vague and general "propaganda for socialism," which by aiming to please everyone ends by satisfying no one.

Our press, furthermore, has failed conspicuously to concern itself intimately with the concrete struggles of the labor movement, though these are the life blood of the revolutionary party. Casual notes and inaccurate headlines "sum up" the battles of the trade unions. We must, on the contrary, make our press felt by the trade union members as their own most conscious and able representative.

No question is more important than that of the press. The press is at once spokesman, voice, leader, and organizer. It is the party made objective and articulate. The advance of the party will be shown most obviously of all by the transformation of the press into the clear, uncompromising, authoritative instrument of revolutionary Marxism.

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3. **Relation to Opponent Parties.** For the Socialist party to aim at becoming in the full sense the revolutionary party of the American working class means that it bids for the leadership of the working class **as against every other party,** not merely every capitalist party but in particular against every other working class party. Every other party is its enemy. It must aim to weaken and destroy the influence of every other party over the working class and to establish the hegemony of its own influence. Unless this is accomplished the workers' revolution is impossible.

The question of the attitude and relation to opponent parties within the working class is an acute and immediate one for the party. The failure to solve it adequately is a significant mark of the hesitation in the party policy as a whole during the months since Cleveland.

There are two widespread errors on this question. There is first the opinion that the opponent working class parties should be simply "ignored," and that all energies should "be directed against the main enemy—capitalism." This opinion is entirely abstract and Utopian, suited perhaps to a dream world, but not to the historical world we live in. Our opponents will defeat us if we do not defeat them: that is the simple truth of the matter. We cannot go peacefully along our own path, and allow them theirs, because the paths cross. Indeed, there must be the conflict and the contest because we are trying to do the same thing that they are—to win the leadership of the working class—and only one party can succeed in doing it. We do not have a private sphere of our own—each working class party operates in the same sphere. **One** must win, and the other must lose. They will not avoid us, no matter how earnestly we try to avoid them, no matter how deep we bury our heads in political sand. And this should be obvious enough. Every day since Cleveland—and before—has seen attacks of every description coming from the Social Democratic Federation and the Communist party. Every day these two reactionary organizations strive now to batter down, now to undermine, our organization and our ideas. And, tragically, under the pressure of those Socialists who mistakenly believe we should "ignore" our opponents, these attacks have gone largely unanswered. We have allowed ourselves to be called "stooges of Landon," "supporters of assassins," "trade union splitters," have allowed our own ranks in many cases to be disoriented, and have for the most part only tried to shut our own eyes and ears. This policy must be sharply reversed. We must decisively answer the attacks and slanders; and must, in correct military fashion adopt the best of all defenses—attack.

Against Conciliation

But, second and even more clearly indefensible, there are also those within the party who meet the attacks of opponent parties by giving way to them and trying to conciliate them. This is to be observed in part in the conciliatory tendencies toward the Social Democratic Federation, but above all in conciliation toward the Communist party. The greatest obstacle to the revolutionary development of our party is Stalinism—both the ideas and the organization of Stalinism. This is the literal truth. The whole policy of the Communist party in this and every other "democratic" country is directed toward preparation for the support of the coming war on the side of the home government in alliance with the Soviet Union, that is toward the turning of the masses over to imperialism. But this policy can succeed only by wiping out any effective revolutionary force. Thus the Communist party here **must,** by any and every means, by attack and "friendship," by blandishment and slander, by bribery and lies and compliments and blackmail and flattery and deceit, strive to prevent the Socialist party from becoming a revolutionary party with mass influence. Understanding this, we can realize how crucial it is to purge our own ranks of every trace of conciliation toward the ideas of Stalinism. We must take seriously our Resolution on War, and carry out the policy which follows from it of combating the American League Against War and Fascism, instead of supporting the parades and meetings of the League. We must attack openly the Communist party fake pacifist organizations. We must carry on a constant polemic in our press and meetings against the treachery of the People's Front, through which there is now being sacrificed the Spanish proletariat, through which the French proletariat is being led to disaster, and which threatens the same fate for the workers of this country.

In general, the party must become and maintain itself as the independent and autonomous representative of revolutionary socialism against all contenders. For this reason alone may be seen the necessity for rejecting any form of the Popular Front, since the Popular Front involves the acceptance of a **program** other than and opposed to that of revolutionary socialism: the program agreed to by the bourgeois-democratic members of the Popular Front, and therefore a program defending capitalism.

Independence Within Labor Party

Likewise, in the case of the Labor party, whatever the future may hold, the Socialist party must continue, without or within the Labor party, as an independent force proclaiming its own program and submitting to criticism and attack **every** other program. For in this sense the program of the Labor party is also a rival and contender for the leadership of the working class. And our possible

or even probable affiliation to a Labor party that may arise after the recent experiences of the campaign have been digested and absorbed by the labor movement, must not be allowed to weaken our firm propagation of our own ideas and the vigorous building of our own organization. This will be the only possible guarantee that if a mass Labor party appears, it will be utilized to the advantage of the revolutionary struggle, and not serve as a force to strangle it.

Favor United Front

At the same time, however, our complete independence from and contest with every opponent party in the working class must go along with, not the rejection of, but a more determined prosecution of the **united front tactic** of action on specific issues. The party must neither avoid the united front nor take a merely passive attitude toward it. On the contrary, to an increasing extent, especially as it consolidates and developes its own independent strength, the party must push the united front tactic aggressively. The united front must not be understood as in any way a "peace pact" or merely a "defense alliance." While aiding the working class in winning immediate demands and gaining the strength of unity of action, the united front from the point of view of the revolutionary party is a major device for extending the sphere of its own influence, reaching ever broader strata of workers, and carrying on the struggle against the influence of the other parties of the working class. The united front, correctly conceived, involving no sacrifice of program or of the right of criticism, provides the opportunity for the revolutionary party to demonstrate in action to the followers of the opponent parties the superiority of its own policies and leadership, and at the same time to expose the falsities of the policies and leadership of the opponent parties. On a variety of fields, in strike and other labor struggles, in defense cases and on the unemployed field, the next months will undoubtedly provide the occasion for most fruitful applications of the united front tactic.

Along with united front tactics the party must devote increasing attention to the possibilities of systematically influencing the membership of **opponent parties.** The best chance for such work in the next months is to be found in the Young Communist League, growing numbers of whose membership have been shaken by the full impact of the opportunist line of the Communist International, by the events in Spain, by the indirect support of Roosevelt, and by the Soviet Trial. In addition, the partial loosening of the previously monolithic organization structure of the Young Communist League enables revolutionary Socialists to permeate it with their ideas, in a more conscious and directed manner than before.

As the party grows and develops as a revolutionary force, we may confidently expect recruitment in considerable and increasing numbers of revolutionary workers, both those at present unaffiliated and those now members of opponent organizations. We must be prepared to welcome these recruits—many of them tried and experienced in the labor movement—and to aid them in becoming speedily integrated into the party, in assuming the functions, places and in many cases leadership to which their abilities may fit them. The party, after casting off the refuse of Old Guardism, is absorbing new blood. The bureaucratic barriers erected by the ancient regime, and in many cases congealed in constitutional and statutory provisions, against the influx of new forces and the utilization of fresh and vigorous leadership, must be swept aside.

* * *

4. **Struggle Against War.** The fundamental basis of the Cleveland War Resolution is the unchallengeable Marxist principle that the struggle against imperialist war is nothing else than the class struggle for workers' power and for socialism. This principle necessarily implies both the positive assertion of the position of **revolutionary defeatism** and the rejection of all forms of **pacifism,** the central conception of which is the idea of a "fight for peace" divorced from the class truggle for workers' power. The party has, however, entirely failed to translate the principles of the Cleveland Convention into the active life of the party. The elimination of the remnants of Old Guardism and social-patriotism, as well as the resistance to the inroads of the Communist International's war position, cannot be accomplished without a determined struggle against the illusions of pacifism. Essential to this task is a realistic analysis of existing "peace" organizations. Both the reactionary organizations which work for "peace" by making peace with capitalist imperialism and adopting the policy of "national defense," and Communist party controlled American League Against War and Fascism which in the name of peace prepares to support "peace-loving democratic," capitalist nations in the next world war are vicious and hypocritical. The principle of the People's Front has also invaded the pacifist field through the Emergency Peace Campaign and similar organizations which for the sake of numbers hide from the masses the true character of the war danger and the sole means by which in actuality it can be fought. There are also such pacifist organizations as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the War Resisters which recognize the capitalist basis for imperialist war yet cherish and foster the fatal illusion that the class struggle for workers' power is unnecessary and avoidable. The war question is the crucial question of the present epoch. In answer to it we must put forward with no compromise or equivocation the ideas and practises of Marxist Internationalism.

* * *

5. **The International Question.** During the months ahead the party must devote increasing attention to the developments in the international labor movement. As Socialists, we hold to the conception that the class struggle of the workers is international in character; and, consequently, our own development toward a complete revolutionary position cannot be divorced from the developments in the world movement. We must evaluate the regroupments and realignments taking place with startling rapidity under the pressure of the great events in Europe, and seek thereby to determine our genuine international allies and to forge strong bonds which will unite us with them. We must, for example, take note of what the "neutrality policy" of the Socialist party of France and the British Labor party in the face of the Spanish civil war has revealed as to the nature of these two parties. The party membership must know the facts; the fact, for example, that the Bureau of the Labor and Socialist International **declined to support us in the Presidential election** in spite of a specific request from the NEC that it do so. The party must take into account the enthusiastic congratulations of Blum and the leaders of the British Labor party, as well as of the Soviet officialdom, on the victory of Roosevelt. The facts must be made known, they must be analyzed, and appropriate conclusions must be drawn. The approach of the new war, the open outbreak of renewed revolutionary struggles, demand imperatively the firm union on a world scale into one movement of all the forces standing unequivocally for revolutionary internationalism. Only this will guarantee victory.

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6. **The Youth.** In the party struggles of the past few years, the YPSL has played an altogether honorable role.

It has had a great part in the leftward development of the party, and its pressure has been consistently in a revolutionary direction. Serious problems and difficulties still face the YPSL of course: among them, to weed out what remains there are of Stalinist influence within the YPSL ranks, and to turn outward, by more vigorous work in mass organizations, from a too inward life. But what is above all essential with respect to the YPSL is to prevent any attempt to stifle its continuing revolutionary development, to guard against bureaucratic maneuvers which would tend to degrade the League into a mere enlarged Youth Committee of the party. The future of the party as a whole, and consequently of the revolutionary movement in this country, depends in no small measure on the YPSL.

V

The indispensable condition for the realization of such a perspective as has been herein outlined is the creation and consolidation of a genuine, determined, and conscious left wing. This left wing must be built around a clear revolutionary perspective, and must assume its full responsibility in advancing this perspective, in winning the party as a whole to it, and must carry on party activities in accordance with it. The task of the left wing must be plainly understood: it is precisely to take the lead in making the party develop into the revolutionary party of the American working class in the full meaning, both in theory and in practice, of the term. This, in turn, means that the left wing must be organized **for** a definite goal; and it must be likewise understood what it is organized **against.**

The chief obstacles in the way of the revolutionary development of the party are two: the influence of social-democratic **reformism** and of **Stalinism. Both** of these obstacles are from the **right.**.. There is no important obstacle from the **left.** The revolutionary left wing, therefore, must center its attack exclusively on the double danger from the right.

Enemy is to the Right

This point is of utmost significance. A left wing cannot actually be built unless it knows **for** what and **against** what it is building. There are some members of the party who contend that the new left wing must be built against reformists and "centrists" on the right, and against "sectarians" and "ultra-leftists" on the left. Such a statement of the problem is completely false. Though there may be and doubtless are individual "sectarians" within the party these are without influence: there is no sectarian force or tendency within the party at the present time. The obvious proof of this is twofold: in the first place, **every** political failure of the party since Cleveland, the manner of the splits in Pennsylvania and Connecticut, the course of the Wisconsin party in the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, the insufficient attention to trade union work, the lack of policy on Spain and the Soviet Trial, the absence of effective answers to opponent parties, the embarassing maneuvers with the trade union bureaucrats, the over-retention of parliamentary habits . . .— every single important failure represented a **concession to the right:** and, in the second place, virtually every important **success** of the party in mass work, especially in trade union activity, has occurred in localities where the influence of determined left wingers predominates.

The call for a "left wing" to function both against left and right in actuality means the call for the consolidation not of a **revolutionary** but of a **centrist** "left wing," the function of which would be not to assure the revolutionary development of the party but to **prevent** genuine revolutionary development. This is the only possible political interpretation that can be put on it. It represents a concession to the vicious Communist party campaign which is trying to label every revolutionary advance of the Socialist party, every act of resistance on the part of the Socialist party to the treachery of Stalinism, as "one further fall toward the sterile march of sectarian isolation." Genuine left wingers will not be deceived by Communist party sophistries. They will reject the conception of a "left wing" against both left and right, and unite to build a revolutionary left wing able to meet and conquer the common reactionary threats of reformism and Stalinism, able to lead the party forward along the triumphant road of revolutionary Marxism.

The development of the Socialist party into a revolutionary party in the full sense cannot be left to chance, drift, or individual effort. The organization of the genuine left wing is the most efficient, most economical, most expedient and most rapid way in which to reach this goal. And economy, indeed haste are needed. The events of the past year, national and international, show plainly the imperative need for the speedy forging of the revolutionary ranks. Upon this, in all literalness, the fate of the world depends. We cannot, alas, be content to wait for success, to attain the revolutionary party in the concentration camps of the triumphant American Hitler. It is for us to go forward now and immediately, with the resolve that fascism will not conquer, to the defeat and annihilation of American imperialism, and thus with the revolutionary workers of the world to the overthrow of world reaction and triumph of international socialism.

Signed:

James Burnham, New York City
James P. Cannon, S. Francisco
Horald Draper, New York City
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John F. Dwyer, Rochester, N.Y.
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Jean Rudd, Denver
R. S. Saunders, St. Louis
Ted Selander, Toledo
Max Shachtman, New York
Glen Trimble, San Francisco
George M. Whiteside, Kansas
Richard B. Whitten, Elmira, N. Y.

CARL PETERSON

The Socialist party of Minnesota reports with deep sorrow the death of Carl Peterson of Willmar, who died Sunday, Nov. 20, from double pneumonia. Besides being a member of the S.P. state executive committee, Comrade Peterson took a leading role in labor struggles, in workers' education and in the militant Farm-Holiday movement in the western section of the state. He was one of the promising revolutionary leaders of the younger generation. During his confinement at a tuberculosis sanatarium, Carl Peterson was devoting himself to an intensive study of Lenin's and Trotsky's works, to better fit himself to play a part in the struggles of the toilers. Up to the very end, he followed with passionate interest the development of the Spanish Civil War, and the progress of local strike struggles. The workers and farmers of Minnesota have suffered a real loss in the death of Comrade Peterson. He was thirty-two years old. He is survived by his parents, three brothers and two sisters.

The N. E. C. Meeting

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTE, at its meeting last month, was confronted with a heavy responsibility and a great opportunity. The party had just emerged from the most trying electoral campaign of its history. During the months of the campaign, the consequences of the steps taken at Cleveland were being drawn one by one. The New York split widened to a national cleavage. At the same time, events of crucial importance were developing with extraordinary rapidity on the international scene: the war was approaching ever more quickly; France was in the throes of pre-revolutionary struggle; open civil war had begun in Spain.

It was the duty of the N.E.C., first, to sum up the lessons of the months since Cleveland; and, second, to give clear and decisive leadership to the party as a whole for the months to come, to present a perspective which would project the party actively into the heart of the class struggle, and advance it vigorously along the revolutionary path. It must be stated, however, that the N.E.C. failed grievously to fulfill this duty; the results of the meeting will be a disappointment to every militant party member. (The vague and indefinite resolution on party perspectives is practically valueless).

The lessons drawn are confined to a single vague paragraph of the Convention Call. "The Socialist Party has successfully carried on a campaign under the most trying conditions. In spite of the confusion and hysteria, the party remained true to its principles . . ." What do such sentences mean? How are they to be interpreted? The N.E.C. gives us no inkling. What were and are the concrete problems, the specific issues, the proposals for answers? We look in vain to the N.E.C. for a reply.

Not a word about what is happening in France, though France is today the key to the world situation: the outcome in France will decide for the period to come the fate of the European proletariat. Not a word about the shifts and development in the European working-class parties, though these are of inestimable importance for the future of our own party. No word on the attitude of Blum or the British Labor party or the Soviet toward the Spanish Civil War and the Non-intervention Pact. No comment on the new Soviet Constitution, and all that it symbolizes in the life history of the first workers' state. No mention of the Communist party in this country, though during the campaign it showed itself as our most bitter enemy, and has now launched a drive against us of incredible viciousness. The party membership has a right to expect something more from its leadership.

It is necessary to comment more at length on two of the resolutions that were passed: the resolution on Spain and the Convention Call.

The Resolution on Spain

The Spanish Civil War has now reached a stage where it is clear that its outcome will be decided on the international arena. It cannot be thought of as in any sense a mere local or internal struggle. This was, indeed, true from the beginning, as the forces of reaction well understood, in spite of the vain attempts of Blum and Stalin and Baldwin to confine the issue to the Peninsula. Now, however, with the recognition of Franco by Italy and Germany, and by the wide scale appearance on both sides of men and munitions, from other nations, there can be no reasonable doubt in anyone's mind. The results in Spain will profoundly influence the course of the labor movement in every country of the world. The Spanish Civil War, directly or indirectly, is in fact the most burning issue before the working class in every country.

The N.E.C., therefore, rightly devoted a considerable portion of its time to the Spanish events, and adopted two resolutions—one public, one internal—on Spain. Unfortunately, however, the resolutions are woefully inadequate.

The N.E.C. failed entirely to distinguish two questions which must be distinguished if we are to have a policy even approximately correct on the Spanish question: the questions of **material support** and **political support.** This is a distinction which it is necessary to make in connection with every struggle of the workers and their allies. As Socialists, we participate in and give material aid and support to every struggle of the workers and their allies which is, implicitly or explicitly, directed against the class enemy; and we give material support also to non-proletarian struggles of a progressive kind, as for example, colonial uprisings and revolutions. This is elementary, and goes almost without saying; as Socialists we take it for granted. And we give such support independently of political views, of political agreement or disagreement. On the picket line we do not ask a worker to prove that he voted for Norman Thomas before being willing to fight alongside him. He can be a Communist or a Democrat or a Republican, so far as material support goes.

Political Support

The application of this general strategy to the Spanish Civil War is clear. We send material aid to all in Spain who are fighting in the trenches and on the barricades against the armies of the counter-revolution. If their guns are pointing at the hordes of Franco, they are at least to that extent supporting the Spanish revolution, whatever their ideas are, whatever party they belong to, whatever leaders they hold allegiance to.

But the question of political support is an entirely different one, and must in no way be confused with the former. We give political support only to those with whom we agree politically, and we criticize politically those whom we hold to be pursuing a false policy. The reason for this is simple enough to understand. If our analyses are correct, a false political course in Spain will in the end bring about the defeat of the workers no matter what occurs at the moment on the battlefields, no matter how much sacrifice and heroism are displayed by the anti-fascist armies. Only a correct policy will make possible the triumph of the workers, the establishment of the workers' state, and the achievement of socialism. We **must, therefore,** if we are serious in our aim of aiding the Spanish proletariat, use every means in our power to change the false and disastrous policies of the leaders of the working-class parties in Spain, and to substitute for them a correct policy. Otherwise we ourselves will share jointly in the responsibility for the disaster to which those false policies are sure to lead. The analogy to be found in our attitude toward a strike holds here also. If the strike leadership is in the hands of class-collaborationist bureaucrats, and if they are pursuing a policy which will result in a defeat of the strike, the imperative duty of revolutionists, along with the elementary task of giving all possible material support no matter what the policy, is to criticize and attempt to change the false policy. Otherwise, the revolutionists are, once again, jointly responsible for the defeat. Naturally the bureaucrats complain that such criticism "in action" is a "sabotage" and "disruption" of the strike; but Marxists understand, and the workers in time come to understand, that the only genuine support of the strike includes integrally such criticism.

Preparation

But there is another and even more compelling reason why our political support must be given only to revolutionists, and why we must make a clear-cut criticism of every false policy. We are preparing for our own revolution and our own civil war, and we must, if we are to win, learn the lessons of the experiences of the working class elsewhere. And we can learn these lessons only by relentless and completely objective analysis and criticism, only by absorbing everything that is correct and by rejecting all that is false. If the Spanish workers are defeated, through the false policies of their leaders, the full measure of the tragedy is not to be found alone in the suffering and death of those valiant and heroic individuals; the full tragedy would be that they had died **in vain.** And they will have died in vain unless the international proletariat has learned from them—learned not so much how to fire a gun, which can be learned in other ways and is besides never decisive for a revolutionary struggle, but learned the political lessons which alone can guide us to victory. To fail, then, to analyze politically, to criticize politically where criticism is necessary, to squeeze the last drop of political understanding from the Spanish events, is in actuality to be guilty of disservice to the Spanish workers and to the international proletariat, to guarantee in advance that their blood will have been shed to no purpose.

With these distinctions in mind, the inadequacies of the N.E.C. resolutions on Spain are glaring indeed. Even on the question of material aid, the N.E.C., taking more thought of pacifist and religious "sympathizers" than of militant workers within and outside of the party avoided the crucial issues: the raising of the slogan of **Arms for Spain.** Materially, it is arms, above all arms, that the Spanish workers need, and the Socialist party is the only organization in this country in a position to make this clear. This slogan, moreover, publicly raised, will have an electrifying effect on the party itself, and in stimulating the class consciousness of the American workers generally. A civil war is not an occasion for Salvation Army methods and a "social service" approach. Food and bandages, very well; but first and foremost, Arms.

Political Weakness of Resolution

The thorough article analyzing this slogan in the last issue of THE APPEAL makes further comment unnecessary. The gap must be filled at once, and the party's campaign for material aid to Spain must be centered around—**"Arms for Spain."**

To turn to the problem of **political** support: The key political question involved in the Spanish events is of course the question of the Peoples' Front. The Peoples' Front is simply a new name for the old policies of class collaboration and coalition government, policies with which the party split when it cast off and repudiated the reformist Old Guard. These policies are, however, the guiding lines of the leadership of every one of the powerful working class parties in Spain, of the Socialist party, the Communist party, the P.O.U.M. and even of the Anarchists. And through these policies the working class leadership is ever more grimly endangering the struggle of the Spanish workers, is preventing the growth of the revolutionary committees in the army and the factories, is liquidating the workers' militia, is repudiating the struggle for workers' power in favor of the illusory fight for "the democratic republic," is thus preparing in its own way for the defeat of the Spanish revolution. All this the N.E.C. passes off with—"We cannot blind ourselves to the dangers and limitations of Popular Frontism as revealed in the present crisis . . ." What are the dangers, what are the limitations? Above all, how are they to be remedied? It is to these problems that the bulk of the N.E.C. statement should have been addressed. And in the place of the Peoples' Front slogans of the reformists and centrists throughout the world, the N.E.C. should have put forward the slogans which revolutionary Marxism raises in answer to the Spanish crisis: Workers' control of the factories! Freedom for Morocco! Autonomy for the national minorities! For an independent workers' and peasants' militia! Land to the peasants! For the soldiers' committees in the army, the workers' committees in the factories, the peasants' committees in the country! For a national congress of the committees of the soldiers, workers, and peasants! All power to the committees of the soldiers, workers, and peasants!

The Convention Call

No one will deny that in the light of the past months, the further split since Cleveland, the new national and international events, a Special Convention of the party is in order. However, nothing is automatically solved merely by calling a Convention. We must take care that the Convention which we have will be the kind that we need. The Convention Call, it must be confessed, is not a favorable omen.

In the first place, the Call is not properly motivated. It does not explain precisely why we need a Convention or what should be accomplished by it; nor does it give a lead and a direction for the preparation of the Convention itself. So far as there is a motivation, and to judge from the agenda outlined, the impression is created that the problems of the party can be solved by a series of **organizational** steps, by making the party "more unified and efficient in its activities," by "reorganizing the party machinery," by what is loosely referred to by some comrades as "centralization."

It is certainly true that the party machinery needs overhauling, that an increased centralization of party activities is highly desirable. The spectacle of the party during the campaign in one locality conducting a vigorous socialist activity, and in another sinking into the mire of a labor party-liberal-populist-Roosevelt conglomeration such as the Wisconsin Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation, is not a pleasing one to left-wingers. Nor are the kinds of reformist and pacifist statements that appear in books and papers and magazines under the names of party spokesmen. However, on the question of centralization, what left-wingers want to know first of all is: around what policy, in terms of what perspective, will centralization occur? Centralization by itself can solve nothing. The whole meaning of centralization is to be found in its real political content, not in the organizational steps that are taken to give expression and activity to that political content. If the Convention attempts to solve the questions of party machinery and organization and apparatus without first solving the key political questions facing the party, its work will be useless and worse than useless. So far as the left wing goes, its job during the pre-convention period, while carrying party activity forward on the field of the class struggle, is to put forward vigorously the ideas and principles of revolutionary Marxism, and their application to the problems and issues now facing the party.

We must understand that our task is to build a **revolutionary party,** and that there is no magic short-cut toward that goal. It cannot be reached by any organizational sleight-of-hand. It will be gained only through the fusion of Marxist theory and revolutionary practice, only through the determined clarification of our ideas along with and in the very process of the militant extension of our activities in the class struggle. If we keep such a perspective in mind, the Special Convention can be made a milestone on the road; if we neglect it, the Convention may turn out a major setback to the party's development.

The Left Wing Stands for Its Rights in New York

EARLY in November, a meeting of more than 200 of the most active left wingers in the party and the Y.P.S.L. was held for the purpose of considering the problems facing revolutionary Socialists and the measures that should be taken to resolve them. The discussion that took place showed that although an organized left wing had ceased to exist in New York since the Cleveland convention at which the break with the Old Guard was consummated, the need for a broad left wing organization was now greater than ever. Many had joined in the fight against the Old Guard for a variety of reasons. The internal fight was often conducted in such a manner that the fundamental political issues involved were obscured. Numerous other reasons were adduced to emphasize how necessary, for the further development of the party, was an organized left wing group, how signally it could contribute towards promoting the ideas of revolutionary Marxism in the American socialist movement.

Despite the opposition of a few comrades present, who denied the need of an organized group, the overwhelming majority of the audience adopted a motion to constitute the Revolutionary Socialist Educational Society as a membership organization in New York City, based upon general agreement with the Boundbrook program of the old Militant group, the Cleveland anti-war resolution and advocacy of fraction work in mass organizations. In recognition of the strengthening of the left wing forces by virtue of the adherence to the party of the former Workers party members, two leaders of the latter organization were included in the Board of Directors of the R. S. E. S.

In accordance with the aims of the Society, the Board proceeded to plan the holding of regular educational meetings at which the standpoint of the left wing on the important problems of the party would be discussed and clarified. The mere fact that, though bound by general left wing conceptions, there were and are differences of opinion on many points within the R.S.E.S. itself, not only made necessary such a discussion in its own ranks but was by itself adequate refutation of the charge made by centrists concerning the "power" nature of the Society.

Right Wing Opposition

To the astonishment of many who were not alert to the situation that has been developing in the party, the mere constitution of the R.S.E.S. immediately evoked an offensive from centrist and right wing elements in the New York organization. A group of the latter forces suddenly appeared behind an anonymously-presented standard resolution, introduced simultaneously in several party branches and finally in the City Central Committee which proposed nothing more or less than the prohibition of all groups!

Taken off guard, the left wing failed to prevent the passage of this incredible resolution in a couple of branches and later, despite a vigorous debate, its passage by a 28 to 21 vote in the C.C.C. The resolution is almost unprecedented in the history of the party; a parallel can be found only in the bureaucratized Stalinist movement. It not only seeks to prohibit groups in the party but also provides, in effect, for a censorship by the party.

It goes without saying that the resolution was not aimed at groups "in general," for the simple reason that its very initiators constitute, in actuality, a group which is both secret and anonymous. It is aimed at the R.S.E.S. not because the latter is a "Society" but because it is a **Revolutionary** Socialist Society, that is a **left** wing group. It is unfortunate that, by virtue of the suddenness of the stroke, a number of good rank and file left wingers were humbugged either into voting for it or passing it off lightly. They will soon learn to see more clearly. But the important point is that its real sponsors are pursuing aims of a distinct political and factional nature—the aim of preventing the free association of comrades who seek to promote the consistent revolutionary development of the party and the Y.P.S.L.

Left Wing Accepts Challenge

The R.S.E.S. responded immediately to the challenge. An open membership meeting of the Society was called on December 6, to which all party and Y.P.S.L. members were invited by notification in the Socialist Call (now made compulsory by the C.C.C. resolution!). Following the report of the Board of Directors to this excellently attended meeting (some 400 comrades, despite an all-day driving rain), an offer was made to give the floor to anyone who wished to debate the report and advocate the dissolution of the Society. The anonymous and not so anonymous friends of the C.C.C. resolution proved to be a most reluctant lot. Only after a stiffer challenge, did one of them take the floor to advocate dissolution, although even he designated the C.C.C. resolution as "stupid" and unsupportable. A thorough discussion followed in which his arguments were torn to shreds. At the close of the meeting, a resolution prepared by the Board of Directors was presented and adopted by a show of hands which resulted in a **unanimous** approval of the proposal to continue the Society, and of the determination of the group to insist upon its democratic rights and to combat the dangerous tendency revealed by the adoption of the C.C.C. resolution.

The unanimous resolution says, in part: "This resolution (of the C.C.C.), adopted in a moment of factional prejudice, is definitely a move against the traditional right of inner-party association and therefore against inner-party democracy. A precedent of this kind once established, might in the future serve a more unscrupulous party regime as a weapon against all criticism, and can lead eventually to the setting up of a bureaucratic regime which would deprive the membership of all rights and convert them into political automatons. We have seen this process in other working class political organizations and must understand its dangers.

"The R.S.E.S. believes that its existence is necessitated by the inclusive character of the party at the present time, by the existence within the party of other viewpoints besides that of revolutionary Marxism. Not through legislation or suppression, but through education and comparison of views can a unified policy be evolved. The R.S.E.S., like the left wing throughout the country, has only the interests of the party at heart; it will fight vigorously against any party-splitting moves; it favors a disciplined, centralized party, by which it understands a party which acts as one in the class struggle, all of whose members follow one line among the masses and which is based upon a revolutionary policy. But the R.S.E.S. will vigorously oppose all efforts to institute internal bureaucracy in the name of centralization, dictatorship in the name of discipline. The R.S.E.S. calls upon all members of the party to defend vigorously their party rights."

Demand Repeal

It should be added, finally, that a number of branches have already demanded the repeal of the resolution of prohibition, which is such a disgrace to the party. Almost everybody is now calling himself a "left winger" and a "revolutionary socialist"—stylish words! Yet, there are countless genuine revolutionary left wingers who not only know what their rights are and intend to exercise them, but who are serious about their Marxian position. They are determined to band together as an educational force to see to it that, collectively, they accelerate the revolutionary development of the party to the point where Marxian principles will not merely be something that is set down on a piece of paper, but becomes a living reality in the daily life and activity of the party.

Certainly, a revolutionary socialist would be unworthy of the name if he permitted supinely the carrying through of such a resolution as that adopted by the C.C.C. in New York at the instigation of comrades who seem to be of the opinion that once their former faction brought them to office, other groups no longer need to nor have a right to exist!

TOWARD SOCIALIST CLARITY

ALBERT GOLDMAN

ON THE CAMPAIGN

OUR PARTY was the only party that pointed out during the election that in the present period of the decline of capitalism there is no alternative for the working class other than socialism. It was primarily because of that factor that left wingers could and did participate in the campaign without being too greatly embarrassed by a platform which, to put it mildly was not all that a revolutionary Socialist platform should be.

It should not be necessary at this time to repeat that what revolutionary Socialists meant, when they said that the fundamental issue of the campaign was socialism versus capitalism, was not that the campaign was to decide that question but that the working class must be taught that the problems confronting them could not be solved in a fundamental manner except through the destruction of the capitalist system; that fighting to retain democracy as against fascism was like struggling to cure the symptoms and not the disease. The Communists of course did their best to distort the meaning of our campaign slogan by attempting to ridicule us for "trying to usher in socialism" in this campaign, thereby showing that the Communist conception of an election campaign is to get something that is practical and achievable.

But we must confess that at times the accusation levelled against our party by the Stalinists to the effect that we made a lifeless abstraction out of the slogan "socialism versus capitalism" struck home. An election campaign must serve as an educational campaign but an educational campaign that is based simply on contrasting the alleged benefits of socialism as against the miseries of capitalism has very little educational value. The campaign must take the fundamental issue as its guiding thread and utilize the current issues of the day for the purpose of mobilizing the masses for struggle and at the same time connecting those current issues with the fundamental issue. One can shout from now till doomsday that socialism is necessary and that it is better than capitalism but to educate the advanced workers one must explain the significance of great events that agitate the minds of vast numbers of people.

Enough has been written to convince every left wing Socialist that the party leadership failed miserably in the great task confronting it during the campaign. Its failure to take a correct position (it did not even take any position) on the great events that absorbed the interest of every class conscious worker has been repeatedly mentioned. I shall mention some minor matters which indicate that as far as the party leadership was concerned the central slogan of the campaign was more or less a meanigless accident.

Towards the end of the campaign the National Office of the party flooded the branches with a magazine full of pictures, which were intended to convince the American workers of the superiority of socialism over capitalism. It is not necessary to deal with the character of the pictures although it could be truthfully asserted that some of the dwelling places shown in the pictures would not induce many American workers to struggle for socialism.

Now there is absolutely nothing wrong—in fact quite the contrary—in showing pictures of future apartments under socialism. But a picture book which has as its purpose winning workers over to the socialist movement which does not contain a word about the class struggle and which indicates that all the workers have to do, in order to get these nice things shown in the pictures, is to vote the socialist ticket, is worthy of the worst type of reformism. The Old Guard might have hesitated before issuing such nonsense.

And where did we get the nice picture book? From the British Labor party. And so the most revolutionary party of the Labor and Socialist International must depend for its propaganda on the most decrepitly reformist party of the same International.

* * * *

"If we only had more money," was the complaint of many a comrade who sought for an excuse why so little literature was given out by the party. Tremendous effort was exerted to collect money but mainly on the plan of a mail order house. Party members and sympathizers were exhorted to contribute but there was very little in the way of literature to show the contributors that their money was used for effective propaganda. A revolutionary party during the period of struggle under the capitalist system will always be short of funds but the lack of money is not an excuse for any failure to bring out good propaganda literature dealing with events of the day. Not only will comrades and sympathizers gladly give their last penny to publish such literature; sufficient money can be derived from its sale to defray the cost of printing. Collecting money is largely a political task. If a party holds meetings on burning issues; if its speakers give a revolutionary interpretation of those issues, if, in other words, it convinces the advanced workers that it is a revolutionary party, the problem of raising money is more than half solved

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The fact of the matter is that there was enough money to publish the CALL. And unfortunately that was money thrown away. An awful sensation comes over me when I think of what a wonderful opportunity was completely missed by the national campaign paper of the party. The

CALL was alone in the field. It could have harnessed the tremendous enthusiasm of the Yipsels and the revolutionary comrades of the party. Had it dealt with the world-shaking events of the day in a competent manner, from a Marxist point of view; had it given the lead to the comrades on all the perplexing questions confronting them; had it answered the attacks of our enemies vigorously and effectively it would now be sitting on top of the world. Its supremacy as the organ of revolutionary socialism would be unquestioned.

Instead—but what is the use? Who does not know the pictures, relevant and irrelevant; the dreary, didactic editorials (it must be admitted that they were all against capitalism)? Pictures, sermons on socialism—that is petty bourgeois utopian socialism.

* * * *

The Wisconsin Socialist party was swimming in familiar waters during the campaign. Running on the Progressive ticket and burdened only with the "production for use" platform of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation about ten members of the party were elected to office and undoubtedly as far as some of them are concerned socialism has been achieved. I have been unable to find out whether there is such a thing as a Socialist party in Wisconsin. The party members went into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation as individuals and since the platform of the Federation contains the famous "production for use" clause the Wisconsin Socialists are more than satisfied and it is quite certain that they do not see any distinction between the Wisconsin Socialist party and the Federation. And in truth there is none.

Unfortunately the "left" wing of the Wisconsin party was composed of liberal Stalinists with Mrs. Berger as its god-mother and nothing could be expected of such a "left" wing. There must be many a real Socialist in Wisconsin and one of the tasks of the left wing will be to find them and organize them to struggle for the principles of revolutionary socialism .

* * * *

SOCIALISTS SUPPORTING SPANISH DEMOCRACY

IN THIS country our party states that not bourgeois democracy but socialism should be the objective of the workers' struggles. Quite correct. It follows that in Spain where the struggle has reached an infinitely higher level than in this country, where the workers are no longer participating in an election campaign with ballots but are deciding questions on the field of civil war, the idea that the workers must struggle for socialism is a thousand times more applicable than here. The Stalinists persist in fighting for bourgeois democracy even in Spain but I presume that the leadership of our party would not accept the Stalinist contention, at least in theory.

Let us see how some of our party comrades who consider themselves left wingers fail to draw necessary conclusions from the theory that our objective must be socialism and not bourgeois democracy. Even before the National Executive Committee resolved to support the North American Committee for the Defense of Spanish Democracy, the question of supporting a meeting held under the auspices of that committee in Chicago came up before the Chicago Executive Committee of the party. Since it is necessary to clear up a great deal of confusion on this point in the minds of loyal left wing Socialists it is necessary to treat this question in some detail.

The Chicago Executive Committee made a peculiar decision on the question. It would not participate officially in the meeting because the committee under whose auspices the meeting was held accepted a political line contrary to the one accepted by revolutionary Socialists. At the same time it permitted individual party members to participate in the Committee and instructed all party members to distribute leaflets for the meeting. So that the party in Chicago was both in and out of the Committee and the meeting.

The confusion arose from the failure to make the simple distinction between a united front on a programmatic basis which we cannot accept unless the program is our program, and a united front for a specific objective.

In the struggle against the Spanish fascists revolutionary Marxists will fight side by side with every other group bourgeois or proletarian; they will offer aid to every group struggling against the fascists. If for reasons of his own a Basque Catholic priest is willing to take a rifle and shoot a Fascist Catholic priest there is no reason in the world why a revolutionary Socialist should refuse to buy the rifle. We aid and fight together with every person involved in the struggle against fascism.

But that is as far as it goes. Our political program is peculiarly our own and we make no compromises with any other group. It is true we are struggling against fascism but with a different purpose; we are struggling to establish a Socialist Spain while other groups are fighting to retain the bourgeois democratic republic. There can be **unity of action** between these groups but **no unity of program.**

There is no reason in the world why a joint committee should not be created for the purpose of collecting funds to send arms, clothing and other necessities to the Spanish fighters against fascism. And in that committee could be represented Communists, Socialists, anarchists and even liberals. But the joint committee should have as its purpose the collection of funds and nothing else.

As soon as the committee proclams it to be its duty to collect funds to defend Spanish bourgeois democracy it enters into the political arena; it thereby formulates a program and one which is absolutely unacceptable to revolutionary Socialists. Under these circumstances revolutionary Socialists (except as a matter of discipline when higher bodies of the party decide) cannot lend their names to and cannot participate in the calling of such a meeting. Called under the auspices of a committee to defend Spanish democracy a meeting has a political character and it is not permissible for revolutionary Socialists to further the cause of such a meeting.

I do not mean that if a Socialist is invited to speak at such a meeting he should refuse to acept. A Socialist should always take advantage of any invitation to speak before a crowd of workers. But he must make his position crystal clear before the audience of workers. There is then no longer a question of a united front but simply one of accepting a chance to educate those who either do not agree with us or else do not know our position.

United front meetings on Spain have only a symbolic significance, representing the unity of the workers in the common struggle against fascism. Of far greater importance are the political meetings on Spain where the workers should be educated in the political significance of that struggle and be informed of the attitude of the various parties in the Spanish civil war. Such meetings can be held only under the auspices of the Socialist party.

And they should be held with much greater frequency than heretofore.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

THE DECISION of the National Executive Committee to hold regional conferences for the purpose of discussing the problems of the convention would be of great benefit to the party provided it is carried out properly. To these regional conferences should be invited all active comrades; leading comrades representing different tendencies in the party shoud be invited to discuss the situa-

tion in the party and the tasks confronting the convention. Adequate notice should be given and preparations made for these conferences so that comrades from more distant parts could attend.

I fear however that with the exception of a few states the kind of conferences that will be held will not be very valuable in the sense that the active comrades will be able to listen to an intelligent discussion of party matters from all viewpoints. I fear that what the party leadership has in mind with reference to these regional conferences are the kind of campaigns which in the Communist party are called "enlightenment campaigns." And by that euphemistic term is meant an attempt to convince the membership that the leadership is correct.

LEON TROTSKY IN MEXICO?

AS WE GO to press the newspapers carry the announcement that the Foreign Office of the Mexican government will grant comrade Trotsky permission to enter Mexico if he applies for entry. The Mexican petty bourgeois government is anxious to show its liberalism by granting asylum to the one revolutionist whom the capitalist class of every country fears more than any other person.

Will Stalin succeed in changing the decision of the Mexican government? That he will try his utmost to do so is certain. The Mexican Stalinists have already begun a vicious campaign and there is no telling what can happen before Trotsky is actually on Mexican soil. Fortunately for Trotsky Stalin cannot exert economic pressure on Mexico as he did on the Norwegian "Labor" government. And the Communists are not such a strong force as to wield a powerful influence on the Mexican government, although they support Cardenas.

The vital interests of the revolutionary movement demand that Trotsky be given political asylum and that he be permitted to instruct the revolutionary workers the world over by his interpretation of the events of the day. The committee which has been recently organized for the defense of Trotsky is not left without work to do. It must continue its existence to guard his rights and to defend him against the vile calumnies of Stalin and his henchmen.

Socialist Appeal Association

APPLICATIONS for membership in the Socialist Appeal Association have begun to come in from all over the country. And it is not yet a week since the last APPEAL, containing the announcement of the formation of the Appeal Association, was mailed out. Comrades who see the necessity of organizing branches of the Association throughout the country must take the initiative and approach every left wing comrade for membership. As things have lined up we can truthfully say that without the APPEAL it would be next to impossible to organize and educate the left wing.

SEMI-MONTHLY

IT SHOULD be well known by this time that we hesitate to make any definite promises about the time for the appearance of the APPEAL as a semi-monthly. We would rather publish the APPEAL twice a month for several months and then announce that it is a semi-monthly. We intend to play safe.

At any rate this issue, although for members of the party and Yipsels only, marks the first time when the APPEAL comes out twice instead of once during a month. From all indications we shall be able to put out a similar inner party issue every month up till the time of the convention. We therefore do not need to stretch a point to say that this issue will in all probability inaugurate the semi-monthly APPEAL.

This in reality marks a tremendous advance for the left wing. It is up to the loyal left wingers to make sure that there be no retreat. We must make the semi-monthly an absolute certainty and that means that comrades must send in their pledges and contributions regularly. The APPEAL has no paid help and we are not in a position to remind comrades that their pledges have not been paid.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

ANOTHER step in the process of making the APPEAL the organ of a national left wing instead of a small group has been taken with the addition of the names of some prominent left wingers throughout the country as associate editors. The APPEAL competes with no other organ published within the ranks of the Socialist party. There is no reason why it should not be recognized as the national left wing organ. Those who are determined to build the party into a revolutionary instrument will not hesitate to rally around the APPEAL in spite of or, perhaps, because of the concealed hostility to the APPEAL in some of the official circles.

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